

11-2-2018

Newton Hoilette

Newton W. Hoilette
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/stories-2018-fall>

Recommended Citation

Hoilette, Newton W., "Newton Hoilette" (2018). *Fall 2018*. 3.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/stories-2018-fall/3>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the stories of andrews at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2018 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.

My life really started in high school in Jamaica. I was in an Anglican school at the time and determined to be a doctor; I would have been like Albert Schweitzer if my mother had her wishes. But being one of only four Adventists in the school, I soon found myself a witness and that, along with being very active in my local church, made me passionate about making a difference in the community and the lives of individuals.

It was natural, then, when I went to West Indies College to become engaged in evangelism and ministry in addition to studying for my bachelor's degree in theology. I found leadership instinctive and with outstanding mentors in my mother and church elders my path developed towards being a pastor, a youth minister with particular interest in Pathfinders.

That is where my career officially started: inclusive of being a pastor in Jamaica, conducting a large tent crusade, directing the conference youth camp, visioning and building up a new campground—working 24/7 literally, driven by passion for young people. But God had even bigger plans for me, and so I was called to West Indies College as a dean of men. God's ways are not always understood, and I didn't understand them then, neither did many of my colleagues. But I followed God's leading and soon realized why. I am still friends today with the young men whom I worked with and for at that time.

I continued to follow God's leading through an MA at Andrews University, a supporting area of church administration with a concentration in counseling, as well as an EdD in educational psychology and counseling with a minor in religious education. After graduation in 1979, I returned to West Indies College with wider responsibilities of dean of students and academic dean but still passionate about students. There I led the first formidable self-study of West Indies College, with the view of attaining college-wide accreditation, which was presented to the Ministry of Education.

It was in 1982 that, due to the medical needs of my wife, I finally moved to the United States permanently, making my home in the Detroit/Southfield area. There I became director of clinical services for a neuropsychiatric clinic and subsequently program manager for chronic pain management in a local hospital. I loved working in that environment because again I saw myself as helping people.

In 1988, when I was called to be vice president for Student Services at Andrews University, it was a hard decision on the one hand to move from my comfortable life, but on the other hand it was passion for the youth of the church that moved me to accept. The salary drop was over 50 percent, but I believe it was God-ordained. My first year I traveled from Southfield, leaving at 4:30 in the morning and sometimes returning home after midnight after leaving my office on campus after 9 p.m. I didn't mind, not only because of passion but also because I believed that God had prepared me for this job at this time. I had experience in all nine departmental areas which fell under my responsibilities: from student activities to the counseling center to residence halls to the medical center to discipline to campus ministries to career planning and placement to international student services and intramurals.

There are some very specific memories of Andrews University which I cherish. They include the contributions I made and that which I tried to bring to the table. I had been taught by my mother

to be myself and to present well, so I always wore a suit and a tie, together with a matching pocket piece! It was critical to me to be intentional as a role model, particularly for minority students, hopefully showing them the value of pride in personal appearance. I also introduced the worship service known as New Life Fellowship so that students could experience a familiar worship style and be actively engaged in that worship and initiated a mentoring program for minority students through the formation of the Black Faculty Fellowship in 1989. I also initiated and inspired the genesis of the development of the Socrates Project in Benton Harbor.

During those years at Andrews I originated, developed and presented to the Board my vision for and the concept of a “gymnatorium” (a combination of a new gymnasium and auditorium space, complete with facilities for wellness activities inclusive of a new swimming pool, a walking track, basketball, racquetball, etc.). I could see huge student need for these spaces and, as I stated then, this new facility would enhance the recruiting efforts of the University. The Board voted the building of this facility in support of my vision. Other projects such as Buller Hall, already on stream, were in the planning stages. The Howard Performing Arts Center emerged as a donor gift (which met part of the need I had envisioned). Then three years ago, two of my former colleagues, the vice president for University Advancement and vice president for Student Life met with me to give me the good news that my dream was finally in the process of realization. I was able to see for myself the evolution of the plans I had originally sketched with content, now in an architectural form. The former president then affirmed the reality of my building the next day in church. I am finally pleased that my vision and dream will be realized with the new Andraesen Center for Wellness.

I was also involved in other campus-wide initiatives and made connections in organizations beyond the campus. In 1989, faculty and staff service awards banquet recognition was improved and enhanced through my direct involvement and effort by creating certificates, plaques and monetary gifts for recipients at determined five-year levels.

In 1991 I was invited to become a member of the Consultant Evaluator Corps of the North Central Accrediting Association of Schools and Colleges/Universities, now known as the Higher Learning Commission. Upon leaving Andrews, I received due recognition for my 12 years of valuable service from the Corps.

However, all the projects and interests I engaged in were all important only because of my passion for students. That is why on Sabbaths my wife, Elaine, and I would host an average of 25 students (along with faculty and staff) for lunch, as just one indication of our love and nurture for students. We wanted to give them a respite, to invest in them, because we wanted them to understand their value and potential. Lives were changed and commitments to service and the gospel were made. I believe that is why the former president presented me with the J.N. Andrews replica, “Legacy of Leadership,” endorsed to me and my beautiful wife who served along with me for the 15 years of my vice presidency.

I left Andrews 15 years ago, but I want you to know that my passion for students at Andrews is still alive and well. I am proud of my daughter, Dr. Leesha Hoilette, who celebrates 25 years as an alumnus of Andrews Academy and am also proud that my adopted granddaughter Maya Nelson is in her junior year at Andrews. The legacy continues.

